

Slaveholding and Colonization.

A REPLY

TO

GEORGE D. ARMSTRONG, D.D., OF NORFOLK, VA.,

ON

SLAVEHOLDING AND COLONIZATION.

BY

C. VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.,

A MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (O. S.)

PHILADELPHIA:

JOSEPH M. WILSON, 111 SOUTH TENTH STREET.

1858.

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## NOTE.

THIS Article, on Slaveholding and Colonization, is reprinted from the PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE, of December, 1858. It is the *fifth* of a series of Replies, put forth by the writer, in answer to the Letters of Dr. Armstrong, of Norfolk, Va.

The whole series of Letters and Replies has appeared in different numbers of the Presbyterian Magazine, for the year 1858, and will be published in a large pamphlet of about 120 pages.

The present Article is a sort of general Reply, and is nearly complete in itself, so far as this discussion is concerned.

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## SLAVEHOLDING AND COLONIZATION.

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TO THE REV. G. D. ARMSTRONG, D.D.:

Your second rejoinder discusses three subjects, 1. Emancipation and the Church. 2. Emancipation and the State, or Schemes of Emancipation. 3. The History of Anti-slavery Opinions.

The second subject is an entirely new one, which I have hitherto refrained from touching, and which, under ordinary circumstances, I should still decline to discuss.

### SECTION I.—IS EMANCIPATION EXCLUSIVELY A POLITICAL QUESTION?

It has been my endeavour to discriminate carefully between the moral and political aspects of slavery, and to disclaim any interference of the Church, with the proper work of the State. The State alone possesses the right to establish and enforce measures of general emancipation. But does legislation exhaust the subject? In my judgment, it does not. Emancipation has moral and religious relations, as well as political. No slaveholder has the moral right to keep his slaves in bondage, if they are prepared for freedom, and he can wisely set them free.\*

1. There is a distinction between a moral end, to be kept in view, and the political means of attaining that end. The measures to secure emancipation may be political measures, but the end contemplated rests upon a moral obligation. It is my duty, as a Christian, to prepare my slaves for freedom, when Providence opens the way; and yet, I may be so restrained by State laws as to depend upon political intervention for a plan of emancipation. With the latter, the Church has nothing to do.

2. Slavery is not, like despotism, *enjoined* by law. Every individual may be a slaveholder or not, as he pleases. Here is an important distinction, which you entirely overlook. Whilst the State has the right to control emancipation, and can alone ori-

\* A fair compensation may be claimed for the pecuniary sacrifice involved in manumission, either from the State or from the slaves themselves.

ginate general measures, binding upon all its citizens, it commonly leaves emancipation to the discretion of the slaveholder himself. In Virginia, any person may emancipate his slaves, who makes provision for their removal out of the State. The act of emancipation, under these circumstances, is a lawful act of the master which in no way interferes with politics. Where shall a person thus situated, whose conscience troubles him, go for direction? To the State? To the members of the Legislature? No! The question is one of duty to his God. It involves a religious and moral principle; and, admitting that his slaves are prepared for freedom, it is outside of politics. The slaveholder must search the Scriptures, or he may consult the testimonies of the Church for her interpretation of the Scriptures. The Church has a perfect right to give to her members advice on this subject which will guide them in perplexity; and this advice may be volunteered, if circumstances seem to demand it.

3. Slaves stand, ecclesiastically, in the relation of children to parents. Our General Assembly has declared that Christian masters, who have the right to bring their children to baptism, may also present for baptism, in their own name, the children of their slaves. Can it be conceived that the Church has no right to counsel her members concerning the nature and continuance of this peculiar relationship throughout her own households?

4. Slaveholding is "right or wrong, according to circumstances." It belongs in morals to the *adiaphora*, or things indifferent. It may be right in 1858, and wrong in 1868, according as the slaves may be not prepared, or prepared, for emancipation. The very nature of the class of subjects to which it belongs, places it within the scope of Church testimony. The continuance or discontinuance of slaveholding, concerns the character of the slaveholder as a righteous man.

5. Even if the State should altogether remove emancipation from the power of the individual slaveholder, and determine to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over the matter, what then? In the first place, the obligation would still rest upon the master to elevate his slaves, and to set them free whenever the way was open. And in the second place, the master would be bound, as a citizen, to exert himself to obtain from the State the necessary public measures to secure at the right time the same object.

Emancipation is not "properly a political question" in any sense that makes it cease to be a moral and religious one. So far as it partakes of the latter character, the Church has a right, within the limits of her authority, to utter her testimony in favour of it.

## SECTION II.—SLAVERY AND THE INTERESTS OF THE LIFE TO COME.

One of your arguments for excluding emancipation from the influence of Church testimony is that "it does not immediately con-

cern the interests of the life to come." This point can best be determined by impartial witnesses, personally acquainted with the practical workings of slavery. Allow me, then, in all courtesy, to introduce the testimony of some of the ablest and most respected ministers of the Presbyterian Church, who are familiar with the system in its best forms. A Committee, appointed by the Synod of Kentucky, made a Report to that body, in 1835, in which they characterized the system of slavery in the following manner :

"There are certain *effects* springing naturally and necessarily out of such a system, which must also be considered.

"1. Its most striking effect is, *to deprave and degrade its subjects by removing from them the strongest natural checks to human corruption.* There are certain principles of human nature by which God works to save the moral world from ruin. In the slave these principles are eradicated. He is degraded to a mere creature of appetite and passion. These are the feelings by which he is governed. The salt which preserves human nature is extracted, and it is left a putrefying mass.

"2. *It dooms thousands of human beings to hopeless ignorance.* The slave has no motive to acquire knowledge. The master will not undergo the expense of his education. The law positively forbids it. Nor can this state of things become better unless it is determined that slavery shall cease. Slavery cannot be perpetuated if education be generally or universally given to slaves.

"3. *It deprives its subjects, in a great measure, of the privileges of the Gospel.* Their inability to read prevents their access to the Scriptures. The Bible is to them a sealed book. There is no adequate provision made for their attendance upon the public means of grace. Nor are they prepared to profit from instructions designed for their masters. They listen when in the sanctuary to prophesyings in an unknown tongue. Comparatively few of them are taught to bow with their masters around the domestic altar. Family ordinances of religion are almost unknown in the domestic circles of the blacks.

"4. *This system licenses and produces great cruelty.* The whip is placed in the hands of the master, and he may use it at his pleasure, only avoiding the destruction of life. Slaves often suffer all that can be inflicted by wanton caprice, by grasping avarice, by brutal lust, by malignant spite, and by insane anger. Their happiness is the sport of every whim, and the prey of every passion that may enter the master's bosom. Their bodies are lacerated with the lash. Their dignity is habitually insulted. Their tenderest affections are wantonly crushed. Dearest friends are torn asunder. Brothers and sisters, parents and children, see each other no more. There is not a neighbourhood where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. There is not a village or a road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all they hold dear.

"5. *It produces general licentiousness among the slaves.* Marriage, as a civil ordinance, they cannot enjoy. Their marriages are mere contracts, voidable at their master's pleasure or their own. And never, in any civilized country, has respect for these restraints of matrimony been

more nearly obliterated than it has been among our blacks. This system of universal concubinage produces revolting licentiousness.

"6. *This system demoralizes the whites as well as the blacks.* The masters are clothed with despotic power: To depraved humanity this is exceedingly dangerous. Indolence is thus fostered: And hard-heartedness, selfishness, arrogance, and tyranny are, in most men, rapidly developed and fearfully exhibited.

"7. *This system draws down upon us the vengeance of Heaven.* 'If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn to death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it? and shall he not render to every man according to his works?' 'The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. . . . Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them: I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord.' Such is the system, such are some of its effects."

The right of the Church to testify against the permanence of a system of this character, cannot be resisted by pointing to the overruling providence of God, through which many slaves have been brought into his kingdom. The Bible, it is true, treats the distinctions of this life as of comparatively little consequence, and enjoins submission even to wrong-doing and persecution. But must the Church, therefore, refrain from testifying against all social and moral evils, and from exhorting her members to use their best endeavours to bring them to an end?

The two facts adduced by you, do not prove that the Church has no interest in emancipation. 1. In regard to the number of church members among the slaves, I deny that "a larger proportion of the labouring classes belong to the Christian Church where the labourers are chiefly slaves, than in the Northern States, where slavery does not exist."

2. Your second fact, that the number of church members among the slaves, is nearly double the number of communicants in the heathen world, proves that God has overruled the system of slavery for good, but not that the Church has no interest in its abrogation. When we consider that at least twelve thousand ministers of the Gospel live in the Slave States, being in the proportion of one minister to nine hundred of the whole population, while, on the other hand, the number of missionaries among the heathen is only in the proportion of one minister to three hundred thousand of the population, the comparison by no means exalts slavery as an instrument of evangelization. Look, rather, for a better example to the Sandwich Islands, where society has been Christianized in a single generation.

The system of slavery, as appears from the analysis of its evils by our Kentucky brethren, has so many and immediate connec-

tions with the life to come, that the Christian Church may wisely testify in favour of its abrogation, as a lawful end, whenever Providence opens the way for it.

### SECTION III.—SLAVEHOLDING AND THE BIBLE.

The Word of God, when fairly interpreted, contains much instruction upon this subject. In the first place, the exhortation of Paul to the slaves is: "Art thou called, being a servant? Care not for it. But IF THOU MAYST BE FREE, USE IT RATHER." (1 Cor. 7 : 21.) This last declaration proves that slavery is not a natural and permanent condition; that liberty is a higher and better state than bondage; and that emancipation is an object of lawful desire to the slaves, and a blessing which Christian masters may labour to confer upon them. In endeavouring to escape the power of this apostolic declaration, you maintain that it has only a local application, and that "throughout the chapter, in answer to inquiries from the Church at Corinth, Paul is giving instruction with especial regard to the circumstances in which the Corinthians were placed at that time, and hence, every special item of advice must be interpreted with this fact in view." The same thing is stated in your book.

1. Admitting your *local* interpretation to be the true one, what then? Does not my good brother Armstrong see that, if he in this way gets rid of Paul's declaration in favour of freedom, he also impairs the permanent obligation of Christian slaves to remain contented in their bondage? If the *second* clause of the sentence has a local application, and is limited to the state of things in the Corinthian Church, is not the *first* clause limited by the same conditions?

2. Again. The Apostle, in this chapter, carefully discriminates between what he speaks by "permission" and what by "commandment;" and it is strange logic that, because some passages, before and after the 21st verse, are of limited application, therefore every verse in the chapter is so. All that relates to virgins, and to the temporary avoidance of matrimony, &c., is declared to be merely advisory, in view of the existing state of things, or "the present distress;" whereas, the exhortation to believers to be contented with their external condition, from v. 17 to v. 24, is spoken by Divine authority; "and so ordain I in *all the churches*," v. 17. The whole of the passage, 17—24, is manifestly an authoritative declaration of inspiration.

3. Your reasoning in regard to 1 Cor. 7 : 21 would be much more to the purpose, if the hypothesis were that persons were *compelled by law* to enter into the marriage state, or to marry particular individuals. This would be analogous, in the most material points, to the case of the slaves. Surely, if one might be free from



such compulsion, he ought to choose it rather, and that not only in apostolic times, but in every age.

Neither your incorrect interpretation nor your incongruous illustration weakens the force of Paul's famous declaration in favour of freedom, as the best social condition and one that may rightfully be kept in view. Dr. Hodge says, *in loco*, "Paul's object is not to exhort men not to improve their condition, but simply not to allow their social relations to disturb them. He could, with perfect consistency with the context, say, 'Let not your being a slave give you any concern; but if you can become free, choose freedom rather than slavery.'" If the Church, following Paul's example, can give this exhortation to slaves, she can at least exhort and advise masters to take measures to prepare their slaves for freedom, whenever Providence shall open the way for its blessings.

I have not rested the right of the Church to keep emancipation in view, simply upon this single text, but I have showed that, not only do "the universal spirit and principles of religion originate and foster sentiments favourable to the natural rights of mankind," but that "the injunctions of Scripture to masters tend to and necessarily terminate in emancipation." "If the Scriptures enjoin what, of necessity, leads to emancipation, they enjoin emancipation, when the time comes; if they forbid what is necessary to the perpetuity of slavery, they forbid that slavery should be perpetuated." "The Church, therefore, may scripturally keep in view this great moral result, to the glory of her heavenly King." (See *Letters*.)

#### SECTION IV.—THINGS THAT AVAIL, OR AVAIL NOT.

1. You remind me that "it will avail nothing to show that *the Church has often made deliverances on the subject in years that are passed,*" and that "political preaching" and "political church-deliverances" date back "from the days of Constantine," when Church and State became united. Here is an ingenious attempt to dishonour history, and to beat down ancient, as well as modern, testimony. 1. You seem to admit, on reconsideration, that the general testimony of the Church, from the days of Constantine, is against the perpetuity of slavery. 2. But how do you account for the fact that the General Assembly of our Church, which, from its very organization, has been *free* from State dominion, has uniformly testified in favour of preparing the slaves for liberty? On referring to your rejoinder, I find this aberration accounted for on the ground that our Church has not had time to "fully comprehend her true position!" A monarchist might say that, for the same reason, our fathers prematurely drew up the Declaration of Independence, not having waited long enough to comprehend the true position of their country! How much time, beyond *half a century*, does it take the Presbyterian Church to define her interpretation of the word of God? The last deliverance of the General Assem-

bly, in 1845, was affirmed by that body to be harmonious with the first deliverance in 1787. Fifty-eight years produced no variation of sentiment. This uniform testimony of the highest judicatory of the Church must naturally possess great weight, or will "avail" much, with every true Presbyterian.\*

2. You add, "Nor will it avail to show that *emancipation has a bearing upon the well-being of a people—even their spiritual well-being.*" I am truly glad to obtain from Dr. Armstrong this incidental and gratuitous admission, that emancipation really has a bearing upon the best interests of the human family. I thank my good brother for it; although he immediately attempts to nullify it by the declaration that "commerce, railways, agriculture, manufactures," &c., which also promote the welfare of society, cannot, simply on that account, become the subjects of ecclesiastical concern. Our Foreign Missionary Board might certainly build or charter a vessel, if necessary; and it actually sends out printers to work presses, farmers to till the soil, and physicians to minister to bodily health. On the same principle, it might send out "bells" for the mission churches, or even cast them in "foundries," if bells were of sufficient importance, and could not be otherwise obtained. But the principle on which the Church testifies in favour of emancipation is, that it is a moral duty to set slaves free, when prepared in God's providence for freedom; and if the performance of a moral duty has "a bearing upon the well-being of a people," must it therefore be set aside?

3. You also state that it will avail nothing in this argument, unless I can show that you "*place emancipation in the wrong category, or that the Church has a right to meddle with politics.*" This is going over ground already discussed. Let me say, again, that the exhortation of the Church to keep emancipation as an end in view, does not prescribe either the mode or the time of emancipation, and does not in any way come in conflict with the State; and the Church does not "meddle with politics," when she concerns herself about moral duties. If it be a moral duty for a Christian to elevate his slaves and to set them free, when prepared for freedom, the Church has a right to make that declaration, provided she thinks it fairly deducible from the spirit, principles, and precepts of the word of God.

#### SECTION V.—A NEW QUESTION! POLITICS. SCHEMES OF EMANCIPATION. COLONIZATION, ETC.

The largest part of your Rejoinder is taken up with new matter,

\* If Dr. Baxter was a "wiser man" "eighteen years" after 1818, and was therefore entitled to the consideration of higher wisdom in 1836, then still higher wisdom is due to the General Assembly, in 1846, when that body reaffirmed the testimony of 1818, *twenty-eight* years after the issuing of their great document.

I have yet to learn that Dr. Baxter changed his views on the subject of slavery. At least, no quotation of his sentiments by Dr. Armstrong proves it. I have sought in vain for a copy of Dr. Baxter's pamphlet. Will any friend present a copy to the Presbyterian Historical Society? C. V. R.

which is foreign to the discussion of "Emancipation and the Church," and which, according to law, is irrelevant in a Rejoinder, the nature of which is an answer to a previous Repliation. I regret that you have *insisted* upon opening this new field of discussion; but, believing that your remarks leave wrong impressions upon the mind of the reader, I shall take advantage of the occasion to throw out suggestions from a different stand-point.

#### SECTION VI.—POPULAR ERRORS.

I propose, without finding fault with some of the popular errors on your list, to add to their number. I do this, in order to present additional and true elements which belong to the solution of this intricate and difficult problem.

I. It is a mistake to suppose that *the slaves have not a natural desire for freedom*, however erroneous may be their views of freedom. There are certain natural impulses which belong to man, by the constitution of his being. No slavery can quench the aspirations for liberty. In the language of the late GOVERNOR McDOWELL, one of your old fellow-citizens, at Lexington, and one of Virginia's noblest sons, "Sir, you may place the slave where you please; you may dry up to your uttermost the fountains of his feelings, the springs of his thought; you may close upon his mind every avenue of knowledge, and cloud it over with artificial night; you may yoke him to your labours as the ox which liveth only to work, and worketh only to live; you may put him under any process, which, without destroying his value as a slave, will debase and crush him as a rational being; you may do this, and the idea that he was born to be free will survive it all. It is allied to his hope of immortality—it is the ethereal part of his nature, which oppression cannot rend. It is a torch lit up in his soul by the hand of the Deity, and never meant to be extinguished by the hand of man."

If the desire of the slaves for freedom be not as intelligent as it might be, the excuse lies partly in the want of opportunities to acquire higher knowledge, and partly in the bad example of idleness set by the free blacks and by the whites. And if the privilege of liberty were granted in society only to those who entertained entirely correct views of its nature, how many thousands of free citizens in this, and in all lands, ought to be reduced to slavery? It deserves to be remarked in all candour, and without disparagement, that there is danger of the prevalence, in a slave-holding community, of an unintelligent estimate of the value of future liberty to the slaves.

II. It is a mistake to suppose that *slaves possess no natural rights*. Their present incapacity to "exercise beneficially these rights" does not destroy the title to them, but only suspends it. In the mean time, the slaves possess the correlative right of *being made prepared* for the equal privileges of the whole family of man.

Your remark that slavery secures to the slaves the right to labour in a better way "than it is secured to a more elevated race of labourers in Europe, under any of the systems which prevail among the civilized nations of the Old World," will hardly be received by autocrats and despots as a plea for reviving slavery on the continent. Indeed, the new Emperor, Alexander of Russia, is engaged, at this very time, in the great work of doing homage to Christian civilization by emancipating all the serfs of the empire.

III. Another error consists in regarding the Africans as an *inferior race, fit only to be slaves*. Infidelity, as you are aware, has been active at the South in inducing the belief that the negro belongs to an inferior, if not a distinct race. This doctrine is the only foundation of perpetual slavery.\* It is alike hostile to emancipation and injurious to all efforts to elevate the negro to his true position as a fellow-man and an immortal. The slaves belong to Adam's race; are by nature under the wrath and curse, even as others; subjects of the same promises; partakers of the same blessings in Jesus Christ, and heirs of the same eternal inheritance. How the last great day will dissipate unscripural and inhuman prejudices against these children of the common brotherhood!

IV. It is an error to suppose that *slavery is not responsible for suffering, vice, and crime, prevalent under its dominion*. Even were the slaves, if set free, to degenerate into a lower condition, slavery cannot escape from the responsibility of being an abettor of many injuries and evils. Much of the vice and crime of the manufacturing districts of England is undoubtedly owing to that system of labour, which thus becomes responsible for it. According to your theory, it would seem that no system of social or political despotism is accountable for the darkness and degradation of the people. It is sin that causes all the maladies of slavery! But is there no connection between slavery and sin, as demonstrated by the experience of ages? Is slavery a system so innocent as to cast off the obligation to answer for all the suffering and wickedness that have been perpetrated under its connivance? Far be it from me to deny whatever good has been accomplished, in divine Providence, through human bondage. God brings good out of evil; but I cannot shut my eyes to the conviction that slavery is directly responsible to God for a large amount of iniquity, both among the whites and the blacks, which, like a dark cloud, is rolling its way to the judgment.

V. It is an error to suppose that *the African slave-trade ought to be revived*. Among all the popular errors of the day, this is the most mischievous and wicked. God denounces the traffic in human flesh and blood. It has the taint of murder. Our national legis-

\* This defence of perpetual slavery is as old as Aristotle. That philosopher, wishing to establish some plausible plea for slavery, says, "*The barbarians are of a different race from us, and were born to be slaves to the Greeks.*" To use the language of chess, this doctrine is "Aristotle's opening."

lation righteously classes it with piracy, and condemns its abettors to the gallows. And yet, in Conventions and Legislatures of a number of the slave-holding States, the revival of the African slave-trade meets with favour. This fact is an ominous proof of the demoralization of public sentiment, under the influence and operation of a system of slavery.

VI. Another error is, that *slavery is a permanent institution*. Slavery in the United States must come to an end. Christianity is arraying the public opinion of the world against it. The religion of Jesus Christ never has, and never can countenance the perpetuity of human bondage. The very soil of the planting States, which is growing poorer and poorer every year, refuses to support slavery in the long run. Its impoverished fields are not often renovated, and the system must in time die the death of its own sluggish doom. Besides, the competition of free labour must add to the embarrassments of slavery. Even Africa herself may yet contend with the slave productions of America, in the market of the world.

In short, slavery is compelled to extinction by the operation of natural laws in the providence of the everliving God—which laws act in concert with the spirit and principles of his illuminating word.

VII. Another popular delusion is, that *slavery will always be a safe system*. Thus far, the African race has exhibited extraordinary docility. Will this submission endure forever? God grant that it may! But who, that has a knowledge of human nature, does not tremble in view of future insurrections, under the newly devised provocations of reviving the slave-trade, banishing the free blacks from the soil, and prohibiting emancipation? Granting that insurrections will be always suppressed in the end, yet what terrific scenes of slaughter may they enact on a small scale; what terror will they carry into thousands of households; and what hatred and enmity will they provoke between the two races! The future of slavery in America will present, in all probability, a dark and gloomy history, unless our beloved brethren exert themselves, in season, to arrest its progress, and to provide for its extinction.

The prevalent sentiment in Virginia, in 1832, was thus uttered in the Legislature by *Mr. Chandler, of Norfolk*: "It is admitted by all who have addressed this house, that slavery is a curse, and an increasing one. That it has been destructive to the lives of our citizens, history, with unerring truth, will record. That its future increase will create commotion, cannot be doubted."

VIII. Another mistake is, that *nothing can be done for the removal of slavery*. Elevation is the grand demand of any, and every, scheme of emancipation. Can nothing more be done for the intellectual and moral elevation of the slaves? Much is, indeed, already in process of accomplishment; but this work is left rather to individual Christian exertion, than to the benevolent ope-

ration of public laws. The laws generally discourage education, and thus disown the necessity of enlarged measures for intellectual improvement. If it be said that education and slavery are inconsistent with each other, the excuse is proof of the natural tendency of the system to degradation. Who will deny, however, that a great deal more might be done to prepare the slaves for freedom by private effort and by public legislation? Can it be doubted that measures, favouring prospective emancipation, might be wisely introduced into many of the Slave States? If there were, first, a willing mind, could there not be found, next, a practicable way? PHILIP A. BOLLING, of Buckingham, declared in the Virginia Legislature, in 1832, "The day is fast approaching, when those who oppose all action on this subject, and instead of aiding in devising some feasible plan for freeing their country from an acknowledged curse, cry '*impossible*' to every plan suggested, will curse their perverseness and lament their folly." This is strong language. It comes from one of the public men of your own State, and is adapted to awaken thought.

IX. The last popular error I shall specify, is, that *none of the slaves are now prepared for freedom*. Whilst I am opposed to a scheme of immediate and universal emancipation, for reasons that need not be stated, I suppose that a large number of slaves are capable of rising at once to the responsibilities of freedom, under favouring circumstances, for example, in Liberia. Probably Norfolk itself could furnish scores of such persons, or, to keep within bounds, one score. There must be thousands throughout the plantations of the South, who are, in a good degree, prepared to act well their part in free and congenial communities. Such a representation honours the civilizing power of slavery, and has an important bearing on schemes of emancipation.

#### SECTION VII.—SCHEMES OF EMANCIPATION.

I am now prepared to follow your example in offering some remarks on "emancipation laws."

Allow me here to repeat my regret that you have persisted in discussing this subject. First, because it is foreign to the topic of "Emancipation and the Church;" secondly, because the discussion involves speculations rather than principles; and thirdly, because no living man can, on the one side or the other, deliver very clear utterances, especially without more study than I, for one, have been able to give to the subject. Good, however, will result from an interchange of opinions. My chief motive in noticing this new part of your Rejoinder, on emancipation, is an unwillingness to allow your pro-slavery views to go forth in this Magazine without an answer.

You are right, I think, in supposing that the best emancipation scheme practicable would embrace the following particulars:

“(1.) A law prospective in its operation—say that all slaves born after a certain year, shall become free at the age of twenty-five.

“(2.) Provision for the instruction of those to be emancipated in the rudiments of learning.

“(3.) Provision for their transfer and comfortable settlement in Africa, when they become free.”

Your *first objection* to this scheme is that, “in its practical working, it would prove, to a very large extent, a *transportation*, and not an *emancipation law*.” Let us look at this objection.

1. Many owners of slaves would go with them into other States, and thus no injury would be inflicted upon the slaves, whilst the area of freedom behind them would be enlarged.

2. Many masters would make diligent and earnest efforts to prepare their slaves for freedom, on their plantations, even if other masters sold their slaves for transportation.

3. If some, or many, of the masters were to sell their slaves, it would be doing no more than is done in Virginia, at the present time. The number of Virginia slaves transported annually into other States, has been estimated as high as fifty thousand.

4. A compensation clause might be attached to the plan we are considering, with a prohibition against transportation.

5. The objection is founded upon the supposition that only some of the States adopted the emancipation scheme. The objection would also be diminished in force, in proportion to the number of States adopting the scheme, because the supply of slaves may become greater than the demand.

6. Some evils, necessarily attendant upon general schemes of emancipation, are more than counterbalanced by the greater good accomplished. If Delaware, Maryland, VIRGINIA, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, were to adopt a scheme of prospective emancipation,\* the general advantage to those States, in a social, moral, intellectual, and economical point of view, would more than counterbalance the inherent and minor evils incident to the scheme. The addition of six new States to the area of freedom would probably outweigh all the trials incident to the transition period.

An emancipation scheme, similar to that propounded, was tested in the Northern States, where it succeeded well; and you could not have appealed to a better illustration of its wisdom. The number of slaves transported could not have been very great, because the whole number in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, was only about 40,000 in the year 1790, when these schemes were generally commenced, and the number of Africans in those States was more than double at the next census.

On the whole, a prospective emancipation scheme, with or without a compensation or prohibitory clause, would, in the States

\* Ought not such a scheme to *begin* with these States?

named, do more, in the end, in behalf of the African race and the cause of freedom, than the inactive policy of doing nothing.

*Objection 2d.* You object to the plan "on the ground that the slave race cannot be prepared for freedom by any short course of education, such as that proposed."

1. Suppose that the Legislature of Virginia should enact that all slaves born after 1870, shall become free at the age of twenty-five. The course of education would be precisely as long as the process of nature allows. It would embrace *the whole of the training period of an entire generation*; and with the intellectual and moral resources already in possession of the African race in Virginia, a general and faithful effort to elevate the young would result, under God, in a substantial advancement of condition, auguring well for freedom.

2. Your own experiment with the two slaves is just in point. It shows how much can be done, on a small scale, and, if so, on a larger scale. These slaves were taught to read and write; they were fitted for freedom at the age of thirty-two; and they were then set free, as "good colonists for Liberia." Although they did not ultimately go to Liberia, perhaps their addition "to the number of free negroes in Virginia," was esteemed by them a higher benefit than it seems to you. They were, at any rate, qualified for freedom in Liberia.

3. To the idea that all the emancipated slaves ought to be "compelled to go to Liberia," you present three difficulties. (1.) "It is vain to expect to make good citizens for Liberia, by sending them there against their will, like convicts to a penal colony." I reply, that Liberia is becoming to the African race more and more an object of desire; that there is no more compulsion in the case than their own best interests demand, as persons who, up to that period, are in the state of minors; that the prospect of liberty in Liberia is very different from that of penal labour and suffering by convicts; and that, if your remark be true, that it is vain to expect to make "good citizens for Liberia, by sending them against their will," is it not equally vain to expect to make good citizens of slaves by keeping them in slavery "against their will?" (2.) You say that we deceive ourselves in speaking of Africa as "their native country," "their home." I reply that the race-mark indelibly identifies the slaves with Africa; that their own traditions connect them with their fatherland; that the decisions of the United States Supreme Court deny them to be "citizens" of this country; and that their own affections are becoming stronger and stronger in favour of returning to Africa, as their minds become enlightened. (3.) Another obstacle to "compulsory expatriation," in your judgment, is, that it would "sunder ties both of family and affection." I reply, not necessarily either the one or the other, as a general rule. On the supposition of a compensation law, which



is the true principle, there would be no sundering of family ties; and as to ties of affection for their masters or friends left behind, every emigrant to our Western States expects to bear them. Besides, instead of a "compulsory expatriation," it would be virtually a voluntary return to the land of their fathers.

*Objection 3d.* Your third objection to the proposed gradual emancipation scheme is, that you "do not see the least prospect of Liberia being able to do the part assigned to it in this plan for a long time to come." This is the objection of greatest weight.

#### SECTION VIII.—LIBERIAN COLONIZATION.

You will agree with me, if I mistake not, in three particulars:

1. African Colonization is a scheme, founded in wise and far-reaching views of African character and destiny. The coloured race can never attain to social and political elevation in the United States. The experience of the past is a demonstration against the continuance of the two races in this country on terms favourable to the negroes; and there is reason to believe that the future will be a period of increased disadvantage and hardship. The colonization of the coloured people in Africa is, therefore, in its conception, a scheme of profound wisdom and true benevolence.

2. You will also agree with me in the opinion that the measures for Liberian Colonization may be *indefinitely extended*. Territory, larger than the Atlantic slope, may be procured in the interior of Africa; money enough may be obtained from the sale of the public lands, or from other national resources; vessels are already on hand to meet the demands of the largest transportation; and emigrants, of a hopeful character, and in large numbers, may be expected to present themselves, at the indicated time, in the providence of God. There are no limits to the plan of Liberian Colonization. Your own faith in its ultimate capabilities seems to be shaded with doubt, only in reference to the question of *time*.

3. Further. You will agree with me in the opinion that *much more might be done, at once*, in the actual working of the Liberian scheme. Among the coloured population in this country are large numbers, both bond and free, who are superior to the average class of emigrants already sent out.

#### SECTION IX.—WHICH CLASS SHOULD BE SENT FIRST, THE FREE, OR THE SLAVES?

In your judgment, we ought "to adhere to the course marked out by the founders of the Colonization Society, and attend first to the free people of colour; and only after our work here has been done, ought we to think of resorting to colonization as an adjunct to emancipation."

1. The discussion of this issue is outside even of the new theme; because the plan of emancipation, proposed by yourself, *assumes* the colonization of the slaves as one of its main features. I submit that it is not in order to deny your own admissions.

2. The colonization of slaves, when set free, is precisely in accordance with the constitution of the American Colonization Society. And the Society has been acting upon this principle from the beginning. The majority of emigrants belong to the class that were once slaves, and who have been made free with the object of removal to Africa, as colonists.

3. I see no reason why the sympathy of philanthropy should be first concentrated upon the free blacks. This class of our population are, indeed, entitled to our warm interest and our Christian exertions to promote their welfare; but why to an exclusive and partial benevolence? If you reply, as you do, because "the condition of the free people of colour is worse than that of our slaves," then I beg leave to call in question the statement, and to invalidate it, in part, by your own declaration, that at least fifty thousand of the free blacks are more intelligent and better prepared for colonization than can be found among the slaves. When the exigency of the argument requires you to sustain slavery, you depreciate the free blacks and make them "lower than the slaves;" but when colonization demands the best quality of emigrants, then you depreciate the slaves and point to "fifty thousand" free blacks, who are superior to slaves.

4. I might assign many reasons why, if Liberian colonization be a benevolent scheme, the race in slavery ought not to be excluded from its benefits. But, this point being assumed, as I have stated, an axiom of our problem, it is unnecessary to establish it by argument.

5. Let us compromise this issue on a principle of Christian equity, viz.: *simultaneous* efforts should be made to colonize the blacks who are already free, and those who may be set free for that purpose. You will not deny that there are hundreds and thousands of Christian slaves who, if emancipated, would make good citizens of Liberia. Why, then, should the social and political elevation of these men be postponed, and the good they might do in Africa be lost, simply because there are free people of colour in the land, who are also proper subjects of colonization?

#### SECTION X.—WHAT THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY HAS DONE.

Before the establishment of the Republic of Liberia, the future of the African race, in this country, was dreary and almost without hope. The mind of the philanthropist had no resting-place for its anxious thoughts; the pious slave-holder lived in faith, without the suggestion of any effectual remedy; and the negro race in America seemed doomed to labour for generations, and then sink away or

perish. In God's good time, a Republic springs up in the Eastern world! It is an African Republic; and composed mainly of those who once were slaves in America. What an event in the history of civilization! Even in this last half century of wonders, it stands out in the greatness of moral and political pre-eminence.

For some account of the results of African Colonization, I refer you to my Address at the opening of the Ashmun Institute, entitled "GOD GLORIFIED BY AFRICA." It is sufficient here to say that the Liberian Republic, with its institutions of freedom, contains about 10,000 emigrants from America, of whom 6000 were once Southern slaves. Its schools, academies, and churches; its growing commerce, improving agriculture, and intelligent legislation; its favourable location, Protestantism, and Anglo-Saxon speech: all conspire to demonstrate the truth of the principles on which it was founded, and to develop a national prosperity rarely equalled in the history of colonization.

In short, the Liberian Republic is a *good work, well done*. LAUS DEO!

#### SECTION XI.—WHAT MAY BE REASONABLY EXPECTED OF LIBERIA.

Let us be hopeful. Cheer up, Brother Armstrong! Ethiopia is yet to stretch out her hands unto God. An eminent Southern divine has well said, "I acknowledge the duty, which rests upon all, to hope great things and attempt great things, and look with holy anxiety at the signs of the times."

I. Let us *hope* great things. "Hope, that is seen, is not hope;" and I may add, without irreverence, hope, that will not see, is not hope. Your views about the permanence of slavery prevent the access to your mind of large hopes from the Liberian scheme. In your Letters and Rejoinders, you several times express doubt whether slavery in the United States is ever to end! Nor does it seem to you very desirable that it should end.

II. The people of God should *attempt* great things for the African race. Prosperity has attended African colonization thus far; and under circumstances to stimulate to more active and extended efforts.

*Assimilation.* The great obstacle is, as you state, "the difficulty in assimilating such an immigration as we are able to send" to Liberia.

The fact of an "indiscriminate immigration," composed chiefly of slaves, accomplishing so much in Liberia, is very encouraging in regard to the possibility of success on a larger scale.

The emigrants to be sent out by the scheme of emancipation under review, would be of a higher character than the class already there. One of the features of this plan involves "provision for the *instruction* of those to be emancipated in the rudiments of learning." Education is, under God, a mighty elevator. The question,

whether a people shall be raised up in the scale of intelligence or be allowed to remain unlettered and in gross ignorance, decides the destiny of nations. It will certainly decide the destiny of African colonization. The proposed plan contemplates a long interval of preparation, an interval of *thirty-seven years*, during which time a new generation is to come forward under a full system of "Christian appliances." A very different class of emigrants will, therefore, be made ready for colonization. Nor is it chimerical to suppose that great elevation of character would attend measures for the instruction of the young slaves, under the kindly intercourse, supervision, and example of one and a quarter millions of white members of the Church of Christ, and twelve thousand ministers of the Gospel.\* These emigrants, thus prepared for freedom, would be prepared for assimilation.

The difficulty of foreign immigration to this country is in its diversity and irreligion. Speaking foreign tongues, trained to different habits and customs, debased by Roman superstition, or corrupted by German infidelity, the mass of our immigrants are far more difficult to fuse into our existing population than would be the Africans *into their own race* at Liberia. In the case of colonization in Liberia, the population would be homogeneous, of a more intelligent order than the original population, and under the influences of the Christian religion.

African character is improving in Liberia. Instead of deteriorating, as when in contact with the white race, it is now gaining admiration in the political world. What has been wanting to raise the negro character is education, the habit of self-reliance, and a fair opportunity for development on a field of its own, unhindered by contact with the white race. An illustration of the elevating power of a removal to a congenial field, is seen in the case of thousands of impoverished whites in the slaveholding States. This class, doomed to poverty, and often to degradation, by the law of slavery, rise to influence, wealth, and importance, when they emigrate to new States. A similar influence will bless the negro race, when separated from contaminating influences, and disciplined to bear its part among the governments of the world.

In Liberia, new communities would be formed, and settlements established in different parts of the extending republic, to meet the demands of emigration. "Assimilation" is easier under circumstances of diffusion than of aggregation. As, in our own country, the facility of acquiring land in the new Territories and States, promotes the welfare of the emigrants, and fixes them in homes comparatively remote from cities and overgrown districts, so the Liberian scheme proposes to establish its large accessions of emigrants in independent and separate communities, increasing in number with the demand for enlargement.

\* This is the best estimate I can make of the number of white communicants and ministers in the Southern churches.

The "deep-rooted *distrust* of the capacity of their own people for safely conducting the affairs of government" need give a friend of colonization no concern whatever. The race in this country has never had the opportunity of proving its capacity to take charge of public interests. The only experiment hitherto made has been successful. The government of Liberia is administered with as much skill as that of most of the States in our Union, and the republic is growing in importance among the nations of the earth. The Africans will learn soon enough to put confidence in Liberia, and to prefer their own administration to that of any other people in America.

Your "*rule of three*" will hardly work in reference to the developments of God's providence. "If now it has taken thirty-four years to place a colony of ten thousand on the coast of Africa, when can we reasonably calculate that our work will be done" with hundreds of thousands? Verily, by the Armstrong rule, no calculation would be "reasonable." Virginia herself could by ciphered out of her present civilization and glory, by writing down, for the basis of the problem, the original Jamestown efforts at colonization. The "rule of three," irrelevant as it has always been, will become less and less geometrical, "as ye see the day approaching." How will it work when "nations are born in a day?"

It must be admitted that, although the rule is unfair in such a discussion, no human sagacity can scan the problem of African colonization. It is certain, however, that many of our wisest men regard colonization as the most hopeful adjunct to emancipation. On the question of time, there is room for difference of opinion; and so there is, indeed, on all points. The late DR. ALEXANDER, than whom no man stood higher in Virginia for wisdom and far-reaching views, thus sums up his views of the capacity of Liberia to receive the coloured race of America: "If Liberia should continue to flourish and increase, it is *not so improbable*, as many suppose, that the *greater part* of the African race, now in this country, will, in the inscrutable dispensations of Providence, be restored to the country of their fathers." Some of our most distinguished political characters have expressed the same opinion.\*

There are various providential aspects, which encourage large expectations from Liberian colonization, in its connection with the removal of American slavery, and which serve to show that an emancipation movement, of some kind, cannot be far off.

### III. Besides hoping great things, and attempting great things,

\* An enlightened advocate of colonization, as an adjunct to emancipation, need not maintain that the *whole* African race in this country must go to Liberia. Many of them will probably remain behind in this country, to struggle with adversity, and perhaps at last to die away. Dr. Alexander's language goes as far as is necessary to meet the case. "*The greater part* of the African race" will probably be restored to Africa.

we should "look with holy anxiety at THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES." Providence is a quickening instructor.

1. One of the signs of the times is, *the general sentiment of the civilized world* in favour of measures of emancipation. Slavery has existed in the United States for two centuries, during which period it has been overruled, in many ways, for great good to the slaves. But can it long survive the pressure of public sentiment at home and abroad? When all Christian and civilized nations are opposed to its continuance, must it not, before long, adopt some active measures tending to its abolition?

2. Another sign of the times is, the demonstration of *African capability*, made by the Republic of Liberia. The light of this Republic spreads far into the future. It illuminates the vista of distant years, and cheers the heart of philanthropy with the sight of a great and rising nation. The moral power of the successful enterprise on the shores of Africa, is like the voice of God speaking to the children of Israel to "go forward."

3. *The exploration of Africa*, just at this period of her history, is another cheering sign for colonization. Preparations for a great work are going on for that dark continent. Whatever develops Africa's resources, is a token of good to her descendants everywhere. Elevate the continent, and the race is free. These explorations will serve, in part, to satisfy the public mind in reference to the healthfulness and fertility of the country, back from the sea, and its adaptation to all the purposes of colonization.

4. Another sign of approaching crisis, favourable to some important results, is in the *South* itself. After a long period of repose, it presents tokens of internal divisions, of excitement, and of extreme measures. The revival of the African slave-trade, which is a popular plan in six States, and bids defiance to God and nations; the preparations, commenced in Maryland and elsewhere, to drive out the free blacks or reduce them to slavery; the movement to prohibit emancipation by legislative enactment; the laws against the instruction of the slaves; all the recent political advances of slavery, including the judicial decision denying the rights of citizenship to free blacks, and carrying slavery into the national territories; and especially the lowering of the tone of public sentiment on the whole subject of slavery and emancipation, to which even ministers have contributed: all this has the appearance of an impending crisis, and points to some great result in Divine Providence, in spite of all the opposition of man; yea, and by means of it!

5. The times magnify *Colonization as an instrument of civilization*. Behold the new States on the shores of the Pacific, and the rising kingdoms in Australia. Behold the millions who have peopled our own Western States. Colonization has never before displayed such power, or won triumphs so extensive and rapid. Nor has the black man ever attained such dignity as by emigrating to

Africa. Colonization is one of the selected agencies of God to promote the civilization of the human race.

6. It also seems clear that God had some *special purpose of grace and goodness* to accomplish with the slave race, on a large scale. The Africans have been torn from their homes, brought to a land of liberty and religion, civilized and elevated here, to a good degree, and yet, when set free in the land, disowned as citizens, and subjected to a social and political condition, so disparaging as to preclude the hope of fulfilling their mission in America. Everything points to Africa as the field of their highest cultivation and usefulness.

7. The concurring providences of God throughout the earth are harbingers of *the times of renovation and of millennial glory*. The fulfilment of prophecy is at hand. Progress and revolution mark the age. The end is not distant, when "He, whose right it is, shall reign;" and "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God."

With signs like these flashing across the heavens, it is no time for the watchers of the African sky to sleep at their observatories; much less, if they are awake, is it a time to doubt. Providence calls upon the friends of the race to hope great things, and to attempt great things. It points to Liberian Colonization as the most hopeful scheme ever devised for the elevation of Africa's degraded children, and for their emancipation from the long American bondage. Work, and see! Trust, and try!

#### SECTION XII.—EFFECTS OF ENTERTAINING THIS EMANCIPATION SCHEME.

In your judgment, the discussion of emancipation is calculated to "do harm." Why, then, did my good brother introduce the question, and in a form that seemed to demand an answer? The whole discussion is evidently foreign from the original issues between us, as most readers readily see.

For myself, I do not believe, that a calm and Christian discussion of this vast social and political question will do any injury at all. It needs investigation. It requires it before God and man. The interests of the white race and of the black race, the welfare of the present and succeeding generations, conscience, political economy, safety, the public opinion of the civilized world, religion, Providence,—all invite serious attention to the question of emancipation. And why should a rational discussion interfere with "the religious instruction and gradual elevation of the African race?" Its natural effect, one would think, would be to stimulate effort in this very direction, at least with Christian and sober-minded people.

The Free States have, unquestionably, been remiss in their duties to the free coloured population. I confess, with shame, this

neglect and injustice. Human nature is the same everywhere. The free blacks have, however, many privileges. They have access to public schools; they have churches in abundance; and if they could enjoy social equality, they would long ago have been "assimilated" in our communities. You ask, "Are you colonizing them in Africa?" I reply, that hitherto they have refused to go, notwithstanding the most earnest and persevering expostulations. The same class of fanatics who have urged immediate and universal emancipation at the South, have decried colonization at the North, and successfully resisted its claims among the free people of colour. There are evidences that a change of opinion is now silently making progress among them in favour of colonization. May God help us to do more in their behalf, and to roll away the reproach, of which you faithfully remind us, and for doing which I give you my thanks.

#### SECTION XIII.—THE WORK AND THE WAY.

There is no difference of opinion between us about the work and the way, although I believe that we ought to keep the end in view, as well as apply the means. Why work in the dark? The great obligation is the improvement of the slaves, their intellectual and moral elevation. The slaves, in my judgment, and, I suppose, in yours, ought to be taught the rudiments of learning. Our missionaries to the heathen place Christian schools among the effective instrumentalities of promoting religion and every good result. What can be gained by keeping the slaves in ignorance, it is difficult to conjecture. Ought not the Bible to be placed in their hands, in order that they may "search the Scriptures" and possess the opportunity of a more complete improvement of their rational powers? A committee, in their report to the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, in 1833, state: "The proportion that read is infinitely small; and the Bible, so far as they can read it for themselves, is, to all intents, a sealed book." Since 1833, progress may have been made in the instruction of the slaves in the rudiments of knowledge. And yet, in view of the fact that several of the States, including Virginia, have, within this period, passed stringent laws prohibiting the slaves from being taught to read, it is difficult to ascertain the nature and extent of this progress, if indeed there be any. In some States, I fear there has been an interposition that leads to retrogradation.

You are right in saying that the most effectual way of promoting emancipation is "through the agency of a gradually ameliorating slavery, the amelioration taking place as the slaves are prepared to profit by it." What strikes a stranger, at the present time, is that the laws have, of late years, become more harsh, especially in the matter of instruction, than ever before. An "ameliorating slavery" would naturally *extend* the educational and general privi-



leges of the slaves. Has there ever been any public legislative action having in view the enlightenment of the slaves? Might not Christian citizens accomplish much more in ameliorating the code, by enlarging the privileges of the slaves in conformity with the recommendations of Mr. Nott?

The remedial suggestions of Mr. Nott, understood to be received with favour by a number of gentlemen at the South, are of much value. If generally adopted, the work of amelioration would be carried forward with an increase of power altogether unknown in the annals of slave civilization. Among his admirable suggestions, which are generally elaborated with much good sense, are the following: "There may be supposed admissible in the progress of amelioration, first, some extension of franchises to those remaining slaves; and secondly, an opportunity of full emancipation to such as may choose it: thus giving to all some share in providing for their social well-being, and opening the path for individual progress and advancement."

An ameliorating system is the only, and the safest, way to emancipation; and in such a system, religious and moral instruction is the strongest element. The plan of emancipation we have been considering could have no prospect of a successful issue, unless, in the course of thirty years, a great advance could be made, under God, in the intellectual and social condition of the slaves. The intermediate work is Christian elevation; after that, emancipation.

I am far from undervaluing the general tendency of Southern civilization towards the improvement of the slaves. Great credit belongs to those of our self-denying brethren who have made special efforts in their own households and on neighbouring plantations. Let this work go on, and thousands of slaves will be prepared for freedom, in Liberia, in the course of another generation. This is the work, and this is the way!

#### SECTION XIV.—THE CHURCH AND ADVISORY TESTIMONY.

After this long digression, of your own seeking, I return to the original topic of the relation of the Church to emancipation. The Church has a right to *enjoin* the performance of all the relative duties specified in the Scriptures, and to give general *counsel*, or *testimony*, in regard to the termination of the relation itself, as a moral and lawful end.

Why a right to give counsel? Because, as I have attempted to show, the relation being abnormal and exceptional, its ultimate dissolution is fairly inferred, as a moral duty, from the general spirit and principles of the word of God. So far as the dissolution of the relation requires the action of the State, the Church has no right to meddle with it in any form, either as to the plan, or the time. The Church has simply the right to advise and urge her

members to prepare their slaves for freedom, as soon as Providence shall open the way for it.

Why may not the Church *enjoin* emancipation? Because slaveholding being right or wrong, according to circumstances, the Church can neither give a specific rule of permanent and universal obligation, nor can it take cognizance of the circumstances of each particular case, which must be adjudicated by the mind and conscience of each individual under his responsibility to God.

The Church, therefore, whilst it cannot prescribe political measures of emancipation, or the time of emancipation, has a perfect right to say to its members, as our General Assembly did, in 1818:

"We earnestly exhort them to *continue, and, if possible, to increase* their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery. We exhort them to suffer no greater delay to take place in this most interesting concern, than a regard to the public welfare truly and indispensably demands."

"And we, at the same time, exhort others to *forbear harsh censures, and uncharitable reflections* on their brethren, who unhappily live among slaves, whom they cannot immediately set free; but who are *really using all of their influence and all their endeavours* to bring them into a state of freedom, *as soon as a door for it can be safely opened.*"

Or, as the Synod of Virginia declared in 1802:

"We consider it the indispensable duty of all who hold slaves to *prepare, by a suitable education, the young among them for a state of freedom, and to liberate them as soon as they shall appear to be duly qualified for that high privilege.*"

In thus maintaining the right of the Church to give advisory testimony, there is scarcely need to add, that the Church is bound to proceed with the wisdom which should ever characterize a court of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### SECTION XV.—THE THIRD LETTER. HISTORY OF ANTI-SLAVERY OPINIONS.

1. I do not conceive that my third letter was based upon the slightest misapprehension. The whole strain of Bishop Hopkins's apology for slavery implies, like your own, that the institution may lawfully exist among a people, forever, without any concern. This I do not believe; and this the Christian Church has not believed, either in earlier or later times. I protest against such doctrine, in however guarded language it may be expressed or concealed.

In the time of Chrysostom, who flourished after Constantine, about A.D. 400, emancipation was encouraged throughout the Empire; more so than my brother Armstrong seems to encourage it now, in the interval of fourteen centuries. There is no reason to infer from Chrysostom's fanciful interpretation of 1 Cor. 7 : 21,

that he was an advocate of the perpetuity of slavery. In some respects, that distant age was in advance of our own.

2. You think that in two instances I confound things that differ. (1.) But I did not understand you as saying that the Christian anti-slavery philanthropists of England were infidels, but simply that they acted *quoad hoc* on infidel principles. I proved that their principles were not those of infidelity; that such an idea was preposterous.\* (2.) Nor did I confound slaveholding with the African slave-trade. The paragraphs from Mr. Bancroft's history embraced both subjects, so that one could not be well separated from the other. Besides, the traffic and the system sustain a close relation to each other. The abettors of perpetual slavery are always prone to defend the slave-trade, as is lamentably witnessed at the present time, in the extreme South.

#### SECTION XVI.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

On reviewing our respective positions on this interesting question, I am confirmed in the correctness of those with which I set out, viz.: that "slaveholding is right or wrong according to circumstances;" that the General Assembly had a right to exhort the members of the Church to prepare their slaves for freedom whenever Providence should open the door for it; that the history of anti-slavery opinions shows that the Church has never regarded slavery as an institution to be perpetuated; that it is wise for us, as *citizens*, to examine the question of emancipation in all its bearings; and that the border States, if no others, might advantageously commence the work speedily, on the plan of a prospective scheme, with Liberian colonization as its adjunct.

On the other hand, if I do not misunderstand you, you have taken the following positions: 1. "Slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God." 2. The Church has no right even to advise her members to elevate their slaves with a view to their freedom, and that the testimonies of the General Assembly, down to 1845, were wrong, and ought never to have been uttered. 3. Slaveholding has always existed in the Church without any reproach, from the earliest times, until Christian philanthropy, adopting the principles of Infidelity, has lately agitated the matter. 4. It is expedient to do nothing in the way of emancipation at present, *if*, indeed, the slaves are ever to be free; and the South had better not send any more slaves to Liberia until the North has sent its free blacks.

By the expression of these sentiments, I fear that, without intending it, you have lowered the tone of public sentiment wherever your influence extends, and have impaired the obligations of conscientious Christians on this great subject. John Randolph declared

\* HOBBS, one of the leaders of infidelity, maintained that every man being by nature at war with every man, the one has a perpetual right to reduce the other to servitude, when he can accomplish the end.

in Congress, "Sir, I envy not the heart nor the head of that man from the North, who rises here to defend slavery from principle." This remark has no direct application, of course, to yourself; but many readers, I fear, will claim, in your behalf, the credit of doing the very thing that John Randolph denounced.

I agree with you about the evils of the course of the fanatical abolitionists; and not any more than yourself do I desire to unite my honour with their assembly.\*

I stand upon the good old ground, occupied by the Presbyterian Church from time immemorial. Believing it to be scriptural ground, I have endeavoured to defend it; and shall, by God's grace, continue to defend it on all fit occasions, against extreme views either at the North or at the South. I further believe that my beloved brethren at the South occupy, in the main, the same conservative position,—a position which has enabled our Church to maintain her scriptural character and her integrity. I do not expect that my brethren, either at the North or South, will agree with me in all the side issues about plans of emancipation, which you have thrown into the argument without any logical authority, and to which I have replied according to the best light given me.

Praying for spiritual blessings upon Africa and her descendants, and that the cause of truth, liberty, and righteousness may prevail from shore to shore,

I am yours fraternally,

C. VAN RENSSELAER.

\* Notwithstanding Dr. Armstrong's strong condemnation of the abolitionists, he practically, but unintentionally, adopts two of their leading principles. 1. He discourages, at least for a long period, the emancipation of slaves, with a view of sending them to Liberia. So far as this generation is concerned, Dr. Armstrong and the abolitionists are, on this point, at unity. 2. He maintains that Africa ought not to be regarded as the country and home of the coloured race; but that America is as much their home as it is his or mine. This is a favourite and fundamental principle of the abolitionists, from which *they* argue emancipation *upon the soil*.

## NOTE. DR. BAXTER ON SLAVERY.

Since writing the foregoing Article, a friend has forwarded to the Presbyterian Historical Society, Dr. Baxter's pamphlet on Slavery. I have read, with great interest and satisfaction, this remarkable production of my revered theological instructor. It breathes the spirit of his great soul.

1. The principles of Dr. Baxter's pamphlet are *not at all inconsistent* with the Assembly's testimony of 1818, which he had a share in preparing and adopting. The general views are coincident with those of that immortal document, with such difference only as was naturally to be expected in looking at the subject from a different stand-point.

2. In the statement of the *doctrine of slavery*, Dr. Baxter fully agrees with me, as will be seen by the following quotations from his pamphlet:

"The relation of the master is lawful, as long as the *circumstances of the case* make slavery necessary." p. 5.

"There is no consistent ground of opposing abolition, without asserting that the relation of master is *right or wrong according to circumstances*, and that the *examination of our circumstances* is necessary to ascertain whether or not it be consistent with our duty." pp. 9, 10.

"It therefore appears plain, that the Apostle determines the relation of master to be a lawful relation. [Here Dr. Armstrong would have stopped, but Dr. Baxter adds.] I only mean that slavery is lawful, whilst *necessary*; or that it is lawful to hold slaves, whilst this is the *best thing that can be done for them*." p. 15.

"I believe that the true ground of Scripture, and of sound philosophy, as to this subject, is, that slavery is lawful in the sight of Heaven, whilst *the character of the slave makes it necessary*." p. 23.

Dr. Armstrong will see that my doctrine of *circumstances*, and nothing else, was in the mind of Dr. Baxter. This was the Assembly's doctrine of 1818. Dr. Baxter was no wiser in 1836, "eighteen years afterwards," because he was scripturally wise in 1818. I have a firmer persuasion than ever, that the great mass of my brethren at the South agree with Dr. Baxter, and not with Dr. Armstrong.

3. Dr. Baxter does not hesitate to speak out, like a man and a Christian, against the idea of the perpetuity of slavery.

"For my part, I do not believe that the system of slavery will or can be perpetual in this country." p. 16.

"Christianity in its future progress through the world, with greater power than has heretofore been witnessed, I have no doubt will banish slavery from the face of the whole earth." p. 17.

"The application of Christian principles to both master and servant, will hasten the day of general emancipation." p. 23.

Dr. Baxter uses no *ifs*, like a man afraid of his shadow, but boldly declares the common conviction of the Christian, and even political, world in regard to the desirableness and certainty of ultimate emancipation.

4. Dr. Baxter's pamphlet is specially directed against the abolition doctrine of immediate emancipation; and his object is to show that slavery can only be abolished by preparing the slaves for freedom under the influences of Christianity. I find nothing in the pamphlet on the question of Church testimony. There is no doubt, in my own mind, that he adhered to his views of 1818, on this, as on other points. God bless his memory and example! "Being dead, he yet speaketh."